

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The reading incentive, "A Community of Readers," promotes literacy by involving the entire school community in a year-long celebration of reading. The innovative program promotes high student achievement by celebrating the importance of reading throughout the school year and not just for a one day or one week event. In addition, the program fosters school and community cooperation and collaboration by involving high school students, elementary students, high school staff, community members and the public library. There is also cross-disciplinary application as students are involved through the media center, their English, Creative Writing, Journalism and Broadcasting classes and Service-Learning.

The promotion began in September with a Books and Breakfast for staff members to give staff an opportunity to preview new library books. During Teen Read Week in October, Broadcasting students produced morning announcements where students and faculty discussed their favorite books. The media center hosted a local author and students from English, Journalism and Creative Writing had an opportunity to interact with and ask questions of the author about the writing and publishing process. A holiday story hour in December was sponsored by the media center and local public library for elementary and pre-school children. High school students dressed as storybook characters read books supplied by the public library to the children. The media center was the site of the Read Across America celebration in March. Ninth grade students, as part of their service learning project, produced children's books that they read to students invited from the local elementary schools. Police officers and the public librarian also participated by reading to the children. The student-produced children's books were then lent to the public library. Again, Broadcasting students participated by producing reading promotion videos for the Read Across America celebration. The media center sponsored a poetry contest in April to coordinate National Poetry Month and National Library Week. Poetry books were displayed and students and staff had an opportunity to submit their poetry which was also displayed. Gift certificates to a local bookstore were awarded as prizes. A spring story hour again jointly sponsored by the public library and school media center was held for local elementary and pre-school children. High school students again dressed as storybook characters read books from the public library as well as their own student-produced children's stories. The media center webpage was utilized as a tool to publicize all the year's reading activities.

The primary objective of the program was to have a collaborative literacy project that involved a comprehensive learning community whereby high school students promoted reading with their peers, elementary students, high school staff, community members and the public library. Other objectives included enhancing students' love of literature through their active role in promoting literacy in their school and community, conducting a multifaceted project that permitted students to utilize their various learning styles and incorporating service learning activities within the media center enhancing school and public library cooperation.

This reading incentive was innovative in the number of groups which were involved in a collaborative approach to promoting reading and that it was a year-long activity. High school students and staff, elementary students, community members and the public library were all involved in the different events. The media center's goal was to promote reading to encourage high student achievement because "studies show that a strong library media program helps students learn more and score higher on standardized achievement tests." (School Library Journal, April 2000, p. 45)

2. List the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

Due to the inter-disciplinary nature of this practice, Core Curriculum Content Standards in the areas of Language Arts and Literacy, Cross-Content Workplace Readiness, Visual and Performing Arts and Social Studies were addressed.

1. Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standard 2, Indicator 8 was met because students used technology to produce the reading promotion videos and used word processor and graphics programs to produce their children's books.

2. CCWR Standard 3, Indicator 15 was met when students applied critical thinking and decision making skills in creating the videos and children's book projects.

3. CCWR Standard 4, Indicator 9 was addressed because students had to have the self-management skills of using time efficiently and effectively since students had deadlines to meet for their projects.

4. Students utilized art elements and art media in producing the reading videos and their children's books to satisfy Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.3.

5. Students prepared book descriptions for the reading video to address Language Arts and Literacy Standard 3.1, speaking for a variety of real purposes and audiences.

6. Students learned to listen actively in a variety of situations (Language Arts and Literacy Standard 3.2) because they were able to incorporate suggestions from the public librarian and other guest speakers in writing their own children's books.

7. Language Arts and Literacy Standard 3.3, writing for a variety of purposes, was met when students wrote the scripts for the videos and in writing their children's books.

8. Language Arts and Literacy Standard 3.4, reading various materials, was satisfied by students reading children's books to gain ideas for their books.

9. Through the service learning component, students learned about Democratic citizenship and analyzed their role as an individual in promoting the general welfare of the community (Social Studies Standard 6.1.15). Students were able to give back to their community by producing children's books that they shared with local elementary children, by participating in the community story hours and by working cooperatively with the public librarian. Students learned that they have a valuable role in their community.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the practices have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

The educational needs of the students are listed in the Language Arts and Literacy Core Curriculum Standard 3.1 descriptive statement, "Language arts literacy develops when students in large and small groups engage in discourse and dialogue about literature, non-fiction and topics of interest." The year-long celebration of reading involving the entire school community encouraged students in large and small groups to read for the purpose of enjoyment. Students learned to share reading enjoyment with their peers and with local elementary children. Students recognized their connection to the community by sharing their books with elementary children and with the public library. Students began to develop their life-long interest in reading and at the same time helped younger children to develop the habit of reading. Students were also able to see the value of school and community cooperation leading to developing their role as a citizen in a democratic society.

Assessment measures used to determine how the objectives were met included checking the media center circulation statistics, attendance statistics from story hours, number of high school students participating in evening story hours, number of elementary schools participating in the Read Across America celebration, and feedback from the community. Circulation increased from 2,956 books during the 1999-2000 school-year to 4,282 books during the 2000-2001 school year. This was an increase of 1,326 books, almost a 50 % increase in books circulated. There were approximately 10 high school students and 15 - 20 elementary/pre-school children at each of the evening story hours. According to the public librarian, these attendance figures are an increase of 10 children over regular attendance at evening story hours held at the public library without support of the high school. All four local elementary schools participated in the Read Across America celebration and the high school hosted over 400 elementary students for that event. The feedback received from the elementary students was very positive and helped the high school students to recognize their importance in the community. Elementary students sent thank-you notes and the public librarian noted that the books were read while at the public library. Her comment was "children were on the floor reading the books and the books always had to be reorganized at the end of the day." The feedback from the community indicated that the year-long reading project was a success.

The service learning component was assessed through written reflections which indicated that students felt they learned a great deal about literature through the project and student confidence in reading to others had improved. Students were excited about sharing their books with the elementary students and one comment was "I was able to share books with eight elementary kids during the Read Across America program." Students also felt that they had attained better reading scores on their Terra Novas however this couldn't be measured because they had taken the GEPA the year before. Finally, the students loved the project and felt that this project may have an effect on their future career choice. Some students were interested in pursuing how to have their books published. Students were recognized for their efforts and learned that they do have a place in promoting reading in their community.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

Replicating this reading incentive program in another school and/or district involves enlisting the cooperation of the media center, an English teacher and/or another teacher interested in promoting reading and the public librarian. Reading needs to be viewed as an activity that is not solely the domain of the school librarian. This helps to encourage student involvement. The following steps are a guide to replicating this practice:

1. Begin small. Don't try to do too much.
2. Enlist support of your school administration.
3. Enlist help from another teacher or media specialist interested in promoting reading.
4. Enlist help from students (encourage student leaders to help promote).
5. Enlist help from public library - Ask them to publicize events and lend their support.
6. Brainstorm ideas for reading activities. Try to plan one reading activity per marking period.
7. Celebrate your successes!